Interview with an Older Adult

This exercise has been adapted from the lesson “Participation in Government: Interview of an Older Adult” from Lesson Plans on Aging Issues: Creative Ways to Meet Social Studies Standards produced by the Ithaca College Gerontology Institute.

General Instructions
Using the questions below, you will conduct an interview with a person at least 60 years of age. Feel free to add questions of your own whenever one occurs to you. Be sure to review the Historical Context section on the following pages before beginning the interview. The complete project will include your questions and the interviewee’s answers (i.e., transcript of the interview) as well as the three Reaction paragraphs described below.

Report Criteria
1. Typed and double-spaced.
2. Include the interview questions in your report in a format that enables the reader to know what the person you are interviewing is referring to.
3. Discuss your personal reaction to the interview in three paragraphs at the end of your report (see final section below).

Interview Questions
1. Please tell me about your childhood, family and school life.
2. Do you consider yourself old? At what ages (or stages) did you notice that you were getting older?
3. What is the most important historical event or period of time that you have lived through?
4. How did it influence you personally?
5. What is the biggest change you have seen in how people conduct their everyday lives?
6. What have been the best years of your life so far? What are your plans for the future?
7. How are young people today different from when you were their age?
8. What advice would you give young people to help them prepare for their old age?
9. Have you ever experienced any negative attitudes or discrimination because of your age? Please explain.
10. Student question. Based on what you've learned, ask at least one more question; what else would you like to know about this person's life?

Reaction
In three paragraphs, discuss your reaction to the interview:
1. What did you learn? Did anything surprise you?
2. How did you feel during the interview?
3. What changes (if any) have occurred in your perception of older adults? (What did you think before? What do you think now?)

Submission
Submit the final interview report to the Dropbox and Turnitin.com no later than Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT.

Historical Context
Before beginning the interview, you should familiarize yourself with national events, trends, and U.S. presidents from the 20th century to the present day that are outlined on the following pages.
Important Events:

1900-1920
Development of big business
Development of transportation
Panama Canal
Airplane invented
One room schools
First automobiles
World War I in Europe
U.S. entry into World War I
Flu epidemic
Armistice Day

1920-1930
Women vote
Prohibition
Flappers
Progressive era
Stock Market crash

1930-1940
Great Depression
New Deal
Radio popular

1940-1950
Pearl Harbor
Draft and World War II
Atomic bomb
V-E Day and V-J Day
Cold war and anti-communism

1950-1960
Sputnik
Fear of nuclear war
TV becomes common appliance
Elvis Presley popular

1960-1970
Vietnam
Civil rights
Great Society programs
John F. Kennedy assassinated
Martin Luther King assassinated
Neil Armstrong, first man on moon (Apollo missions)
Beatles popular

1970-1980
Arab oil embargo
Inflation
Gas Shortage
Drug use more widespread
Computers become more common
Watergate
Richard M. Nixon resigns as president
1980-1990
John Lennon shot and killed
Bell telephone system divided into smaller companies
Sally Ride, first female astronaut
Space shuttle Challenger explodes
AIDS virus
Ruptured Exxon tanker spills oil
Texas elects first woman Governor since Reconstruction

1990-2000
Nelson Mandela, apartheid ends in South Africa
Persian Gulf crisis
East and West Germany reunited-Berlin Wall taken down
Soviet Union dissolved
First wave of “baby boomers” turns 50

2001-2003
Collapse of the World Trade Center in New York City
War with Iraq

2004-2006
Hurricane Katrina

2007-2010
Barack Obama, first African-American elected as President
Breakout of H1N1
Earthquake in Haiti

U.S. Presidents from 1897-present
1897-1901  William McKinley
1901-1909  Theodore Roosevelt
1909-1913  William H. Taft
1913-1921  Woodrow Wilson
1921-1923  Warren Harding
1923-1929  Calvin Coolidge
1929-1933  Herbert Hoover
1933-1945  Franklin D. Roosevelt
1945-1953  Harry Truman
1953-1961  Dwight D. Eisenhower
1961-1963  John F. Kennedy
1963-1969  Lyndon B. Johnson
1969-1974  Richard M. Nixon
1974-1977  Gerald Ford
1977-1981  Jimmy Carter
1981-1989  Ronald Reagan
1989-1992  George Bush
1992-1993  Bill Clinton
2001-2008  George W. Bush
2009-     Barack Obama